

ACTIVITY: Wading

CASE: GSAF 2012.01.15

DATE: Sunday January 15, 2012

LOCATION: The attack took place in the Indian Ocean at Second Beach in Port St. John's, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa.

NAME: Lungisani 'Ngidi' Msungubana

DESCRIPTION: He was a 25-year-old male. Captain Mduduzi Godwana, a local police officer, said the man was from nearby Tombo village.

BACKGROUND

WEATHER: At 14h00, Port St Johns recorded an air temperature of 85°F, dew point 77°F, humidity 70%, and wind direction was South at 3.5 mph.

MOON PHASE: Waning Gibbous, 61% of the Moon was illuminated. Last Quarter, January 16, 2012.

SEA CONDITIONS: The water was very warm and murky.

ENVIRONMENT: Town spokesperson Nonceba Madikizela said a preliminary investigation commissioned by the Department of Environmental Affairs in 2009 found the nearby Umzimvubu River is a breeding area for the sharks, and that local sangomas (traditional healers) sacrifice animals on the beach and throw the entrails of slaughtered animals into the sea. Local residents have several additional theories about what draws the sharks to the area. "There was once the death of a whale on Second Beach, and it is believed that the sharks are attracted by the whale fat in the water," said Bantu Goniwe, a lifeguard. Residents said the sharks are also made particularly aggressive by pollution flooding into the sea from the Umzimvubu River; they note there are inadequate toilet facilities in the area to handle the large number of day trippers, particularly during the festive season, with result there is more effluent in the water from the town. Madikizela said the initial investigation by the Natal Sharks Board hadn't been completed because of lack of funding but was recently recommissioned and could be finished later this year. He said the beach is expected to be closed for several months while an investigation gets under way into the cause of the shark strikes there.

DEPTH OF WATER: Waist-deep

TIME: 15h40

NARRATIVE: Msungubana was with friends when the shark approached. Eyewitness Cebo Mafuna was bodysurfing close to the shore when he saw the shark swim close to the man. "I was five metres away when I saw the fin," he said. "It was about a foot high but it didn't look like a big shark. When it came up out of the water, I saw it open its mouth and saw its teeth. It turned the guy on his side and went for him. He tried to fight it off with his arm but it kept attacking."

Provincial health spokesman Sizwe Kupelo reported Msungubana fought with the shark for

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Second Beach, Port St. John's

Courtesy of Gavin McNaughton

a "good five minutes". "His injuries were severe, but while he was fighting for his life, he was shouting for others to get out of the water," he said.

According to Mafuna, the lifeguards seemed reluctant to enter the water at first – they have been among previous targets of the attacks – then one waded out and pushed his surfboard out to the victim. Lifeguard Nqobile Jojo used another lifeguard's surfboard to try to save Ngidi, "I took the surfboard and I waved it at the shark with the victim behind me, and it started to retreat. I then put the victim on the surfboard when other lifeguards came and helped me pull him to shore," Jojo said.

"They pulled him onto the board then used it as a stretcher to bring him to shore but you could tell he wasn't going to make it," said Mafuna. "The shark had bitten his shoulder and chest down his arm to his elbow."

INJURY: Fatal. The man sustained multiple traumatic lacerations to his right torso, shoulder, arm and leg. A doctor who was amongst the swimmers tried to save his life along with paramedics who arrived at the beach. The man died on the way to a local health centre.

SPECIES: It was thought the attack involved a bull shark.